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Former Spy Knocks CIA

By EDWARD K. DELONG

OAKTON, Va. (UPI) — Victor Marchetti embarked 16 years ago on a career that was all any aspiring young spy could ask.

But two years ago, after reaching the highest levels of the Central Intelligence Agency, he became disenchanted with what he perceived to be amorality, overwhelming military influence, waste and duplicity in the spy business. He quit.

Fearing today that the CIA may already have begun "going against the enemy within" the United States as they may conceive it — that is, dissident student groups and civil rights organizations — Marchetti has launched a campaign for more presidential and congressional control over the entire U.S. intelligence community.

"I think we need to do this because we're getting into an awfully dangerous era when we have all this talent (for clandestine operations) in the CIA — and more being developed in the military, which is getting into clandestine operations) — and there just aren't that many places anymore to display that talent," Marchetti says.

"The cold war is fading, so is the war in Southeast Asia, except for Laos. At the same time, we're getting a lot of domestic problems. And there are people in the CIA who — if they aren't right now actually already running domestic operations against student groups, black movements and the like — are certainly considering it.

"This is going to get to be very tempting," Marchetti said in a recent interview at his comfortable home in Oakton, a Washington suburb where many CIA men live.

"There'll be a great temptation for these people to suggest operations and for a president to approve them or to kind of look the other way. You have the danger of intelligence turning against the nation itself, going against 'the enemy within.'"

Marchetti speaks of the CIA from an insider's point of view.

At Pennsylvania State University he deliberately prepared himself for an intelligence career, graduating in 1955 with a degree in Russian studies and history.

Through a professor secretly on the CIA payroll as a talent scout, Marchetti netted the prize all would-be spies dream of — an immediate job offer from the CIA. The offer came during a secret meeting in a hotel room, set up by a stranger who telephoned and identified himself only as "a friend of your brother."

Marchetti spent one year as a CIA agent in the field and 10 more as an analyst of intelligence relating to the Soviet Union, rising through the ranks until he was helping prepare the national intelligence estimates for the White House.

During this period, Marchetti says, "I was a hawk. I believed in what we were doing."

Then he was promoted to the executive staff of the CIA, moving to an office on the top floor of the agency's headquarters across the Potomac River from Washington.

For three years he worked as special as-

sistant to the CIA chief of plans, programs and budgeting; as special assistant to the CIA's executive director; and as executive assistant to the agency's deputy director, Vice Adm. Rufus L. Taylor.

"This put me in a very rare position within the agency and within the intelligence community in general, in that I was in a place where it was being all pulled together," Marchetti said.

"I could see how intelligence analysis was done, and how it fitted into the scheme of clandestine operations. It also gave me an opportunity to get a good view of the intelligence community, too. The National Security Agency. The DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency). The National Reconnaissance Organization. The whole bit.

"And I started to see the politics within the community and the politics between the community and the outside. This change of perspective during those three years had a profound effect on me, because I began to see things I didn't like."

With many of his life-long views about the world shattered, Marchetti decided to abandon his chosen career. One of the last things he did at the CIA was to explain to director Richard Helms why he was leaving.

"I told him I thought the intelligence community and the intelligence agency were too big and too costly, that I thought there was too much military influence on intelligence — and very bad effects from that — and that I felt the need for more control and more direction.

"The clandestine attitude, the amorality of it all, the cold war mentality — these kinds of things made me feel the agency was really out of step with the times," Marchetti said.

"We parted friends. I cried all the way home."

Marchetti, 41, hardly looks the stereotype of a man who spent 14 years in the CIA.

His dark rimmed glasses, full face, slightly stout figure, soft voice, curly black hair and bushy sideburns would seem more at home on a college campus. He pronounces his name the Italian way — Marketti.

Marchetti's first impulse after quitting the CIA was to write a non-fiction account of what was wrong with the U.S. intelligence community. But, he said, he could not bring himself to do it then.

Instead he wrote a spy novel, "a reaction to the James Bond and British spy story stereotypes," which he says looks at the intelligence business realistically from the headquarters point of view he knows so well.

The novel, "The Rope Dancer," was published last month. It is a thinly disguised view of the inner struggle over Vietnam and Russian strategic advances as Marchetti saw them within the CIA, the Pentagon and the White House under President Johnson.

Writing the novel took a year. Then came two tries at non-fiction articles, one rejected as too dull and the other turned down as too chatty, and a start on a second novel.

But Marchetti said the need for intelligence reform continued to gnaw at him, and as his first novel was about to come out he came into contact with others who agreed with him, including Rep. Herman Badillo, D-N.Y.

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Now, Marchetti said, the second novel has been laid aside so he can concentrate on a campaign for reform.

Although now a dove, particularly on Vietnam which he calls an unwinnable war to "support a crooked, corrupt regime that can not even run an election that looks honest," Marchetti says he still believes strongly in the need for intelligence collection.

"It's a fact of life," he said. "For your own protection, you need to know what other people are thinking."

"But intelligence is now a \$6 billion a year business, and that is just too big. It can be done for a lot less, and perhaps done better when you cut out the waste."

For instance, Marchetti said, the National Security Agency—charged in part with trying to decode intercepted messages of foreign governments—wastes about half its \$1 billion yearly budget.

"They have boxcars full of tapes up at Ft. Meade that are 10 years old. Boxcars full! Because in intercepting Soviet radio communications, for instance, the Soviets are just as sophisticated as we are in scrambler systems. It is almost a technical impossibility to break a scrambled, coded message."

"So they just keep collecting the stuff and putting it in boxcars. They continue to listen all over the world. They continue to spend fortunes trying to duplicate the Soviet scrambling and encoding computers," he said.

"By the time someone can break it, a decade or two has gone by. So you find out what they were thinking 20 years ago. So what?"

Marchetti said at one time a National Intelligence Review Board tried to cut out an expensive NSA program that analysts agreed was useless. The CIA director, he said, wrote a memorandum recommending the program stop.

"But Paul Nitze, on his last day in office (as Deputy Secretary of Defense), sent back a memo in which he said he had received the recommendation and considered it, but had decided to continue the program," Marchetti said.

He said this was possible for Nitze because although the director of the CIA is officially in charge of all the nation's intelligence activities, 85 per cent of the money is hidden in the Defense Department budget.

This, said Marchetti, gives the military considerable power to shape intelligence estimates.

He gave as an example a conflict between military and CIA estimates of the number of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong in South Vietnam during the late 1960's. The military wanted a low figure "to show they were killing the VC and North Vietnamese and were winning the war." The CIA reported far too many Communists in South Vietnam to support this military desire, he said.

Ultimately, Marchetti said, the military won and the CIA issued an estimate in which tricky wording seemed to make its best agree with those of the generals.

"Whenever you're working on a problem that the military is deeply interested in—because it's affecting one of their programs or their war in Vietnam or something—and you're not saying what they want you to say, the brow-beating starts, the delaying tactics, the pressure to get the report to read more like they want it to read," he said. "In other words, influencing intelligence for the benefit of their own operation or activity."

"Somehow, some way, you've got to keep your intelligence objective. It can't be a private tool of the military. Nor, for that matter, a private tool of the White House."

Marchetti said there is also waste in almost every technical intelligence gathering program—such as spy satellites, special reconnaissance aircraft, and over-the-horizon radars—because when either the military or the CIA makes a new advance the rival agency follows suit with something almost the same but just different enough to justify its existence.

(To be continued)

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(This is the second and last installment of his interview by UPI.)

By Edward K. DeLong
UPI Staff Writer

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OAKTON, Va. — The thing that troubles Marchetti most about the CIA is its penchant for the dark arts of clandestine paramilitary actions, an area made doubly attractive to the agency because the military scarcely can operate in this field.

"One of the things the CIA clandestine people can do is start up wars," he said. "They can start up a private war in a country, clandestinely, and make it look like it's just something that the local yokels have decided to do themselves."

This, according to Marchetti, is how the United States first began active fighting in Vietnam. It is the type of activity now going on in Cambodia and Laos, where recent congressional testimony revealed the CIA is running a 450-million-dollars-a-year operation, he said.

Marchetti said he is convinced the CIA not only engineered the 1963 overthrow of the Diem regime in Vietnam, which President Nixon also has said was the case, but was also responsible for the coup that ousted Prince Norodom Sihanouk in early 1970, making possible the U.S.-South Vietnamese raid on communist sanctuaries in that country several weeks later.

The Southeast Asia clandestine operations years ago caused the CIA to set up a phoney airline company, Air America, which now has as many employees as the 18,000-member working staff of the CIA itself, he said.

"Well the CIA is not only monkeying around in Vietnam and in Laos," Marchetti said. "They're looking at other areas where these sorts of opportunities may present themselves."

"When they start setting up private air companies and everything else that goes with the wherewithal for supporting a government or an anti-government movement, this is very, very dangerous. Because they can do it in a clandestine fashion and make it difficult for the public to be aware of what is going on."

Marchetti said areas where the CIA might launch future clandestine paramilitary activities include South America, India, Africa and the Philippines — all places in the throes of social upheaval. Upheaval, he said, is what prompts the CIA director to begin planning possible clandestine activities in a country.

"That is so if the president says go in and do something, he's already got his fake airlines to fly in people. He may have a program going with the police in this country or the military in that," according to Marchetti.

In addition to Air America, Marchetti said, the CIA has set up both Southern Air Transport in Miami and Rocky Mountain Air in Phoenix for possible use in paramilitary operations in South America. Similar fake airlines have been bought and sold all over the world, he said, including one in Nepal and another in East Africa.

He also said the CIA has a big depot in the Midwest United States "where they have all kinds of military equipment all kinds of unmarked weapons."

"Over the years they have bought everything they can get their hands on—all over the world—that is untraceable to prepare for the contingency that they might want to ship arms to a group in a place like Guatemala," Marchetti said. "They even used to send weapons buyers around to buy arms from the (Soviet) bloc countries." To fully understand why the CIA conducts semi-legal operations around the world, why it might begin to conduct them in the United States, and why more control needs to be exercised over the agency, Marchetti said, it is necessary to understand the men of the CIA.

Most of them, he said, got their start in the intelligence business during or shortly after World War II when the cold war was going strong.

"These people are super-patriots," he said. "But you've got to remember, too, they're amoral. They're not immoral. They're amoral."

"The director made a speech to the National Press Club where he said 'you've just got to trust us. We are honorable men.' Well, they are honorable men—generally speaking."

"But the nature of the business is such that wrong, good or evil, moral or immoral. The nature of intelligence is that you do things because they have to be done, whether it's right or wrong. If you murder..."

Marchetti did not complete the sentence.

Because the men of the agency are super-patriots, he said, it is only natural for them to view violent protest and dissidence as a major threat to the nation. The inbred CIA reaction, he said, would be to launch a clandestine operation to infiltrate dissident groups.

That, said Marchetti, may already have started to happen.

"I don't have very much to go on," he said. "Just bits and pieces that indicate the U.S. intelligence community is already targeting on groups in this country that they feel to be subversive."

"I know this was being discussed in the halls of the CIA, and that there were a lot of people who felt this should be done."

With the lack of control that exists now over the agency, Marchetti said, an extremely reactionary president could perhaps order the CIA's clandestine activities to go beyond mere infiltration.

"I don't think the likelihood of this is very great," Marchetti said. "But one of the ways to prevent this is to let a little sunshine in, to have some more controls by the Congress."

"There's no reason for so much secrecy. There's no reason the intelligence community shouldn't have its budget examined. Just bothers the hell out of me to see this waste going on and this hiding behind the skirts of national security. You can have your national security, with controls, and you don't need a billion dollars to do it."